

The Origins and Development of the Pacific Islands Scholars Fund*

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Ever since the inception of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) in the late 1960s, there have essentially been two avenues for leadership in the association: one is by organizing (or co-organizing) a concurrent session, which starts by proposing a topic and inviting others to join in a discussion and develop papers on that topic;¹ the other is by serving as an officer or member of the ASAO Board of Directors. In recent years, Pacific Islanders have increasingly taken leadership roles in ASAO, for instance:

- At the 2019 ASAO annual meeting, 43 percent of sessions (12 of a total of 28) were organized or co-organized by Pacific Islander ASAO members. While the 2019 meeting had the highest proportion to date, 28–33 percent of sessions held at the 2015, 2016, and 2017 annual meetings were also Islander-led. In all but two meetings since the year 2000, at least one session has been organized by an Islander scholar, with an average of more than 3 sessions per meeting over the last twenty years.
- The 2019 annual meeting was convened by ASAO Board Chair Albert Refiti. Including Dr. Refiti, between 2015 and 2019, three of the seven members of the ASAO Board of Directors (all elected by the membership) have been Pacific Islanders, and five Islanders have served as ASAO Board Chair since 2002.

These developments represent a gradual but marked change from the earlier decades of the organization, when few Pacific Islanders attended annual meetings or contributed to sessions. In part, this may be an outcome of a wider trend: the growing involvement of Islander scholars in social sciences and other academic disciplines related to Pacific studies. In part, it may also be a result of conscious efforts on the part of ASAO leaders (session organizers, Board members, and officers) to encourage and support Pacific Islander participation. This article traces such efforts

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over time, with a special focus on ASAO's Pacific Islands Scholars Fund (known since 2018 as the Pacific Islands Scholars Award).

Early Intentions and Initiatives

Involving Pacific Islanders as participants in ASAO annual meetings appears to have gotten off to a slow start, although certain individuals were urging attention to this from the beginning of the association. As Dan Jorgensen points out in his paper on ASAO meeting sites, in April 1968 Ron Crocombe suggested that the organization (which was then ASAEIO, the Association for Social Anthropology in Eastern Oceania) meet in the Pacific in order to facilitate Pacific Islander participation. Discussion went so far as proposing the University of the South Pacific's Laucala Bay campus in Suva, Fiji—an idea for which then USP Chancellor Colin Aikman reportedly expressed “cautious interest”—and those who planned to be in the Pacific in 1970 were encouraged to contact Crocombe or Roger Keesing or to make other suggestions (*ASAEIO Newsletter* #3 [August 1969]: 4).² Fiji was also noted as a site likely to bring in more scholars from Australia and New Zealand, and it was thought that the conference program could be built “around Pacific Islanders [political leaders, students, and others] as well as overseas scholars” (*ASAEIO Newsletter* #4 [February 1969]: 2). The first twelve annual meetings of ASAO (1972–1983), however, were held in North America.³

Besides looking at Pacific sites, there were other small moves to encourage Pacific Islander participation in annual meetings. In 1979, the ASAO Board of Directors designated Gene Ogan coordinator of an effort to create a travel fund for Islander meeting participants through contributions solicited through the *ASAO Newsletter*; Gene also planned to develop nominations and review procedures (*ASAO Newsletter* #30 [Spring 1979]: 2; 1979 ASAO Board

and Plenary Meeting minutes: 2–3). But apparently this initiative did not get off the ground at that time.

Meanwhile, a few session organizers took the initiative to obtain outside funding for Pacific Islander travel support. In 1980, Denise O’Brien and Sharon Tiffany, organizers of a symposium titled “Women in Oceania,” used grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific to bring four Islander participants to the meeting in Galveston, Texas: Lolita Huxel (Chamorro linguist at the University of Guam); Piti Maike (social development officer of women’s interests in the Solomon Islands Ministry of Youth and Cultural Affairs); Latu ‘Eveline Fusimalohi (Tongan graduate student at Stanford University); and Mary Karen Sungino (Palauan anthropology student at the University of Guam). Also that year, a symposium titled “Dependency and Development” was attended by John Waikim, a Papua New Guinean, as well as several executive directors and associated personnel from Micronesian Community Action Agencies: Juan Babuata (Marianas), Ismael Dobich (Truk), Kodaro Gallen (Ponape), Katherine Kesolei (Palau), Michael Konelius (Marshalls), Jim Jacobson (Saipan), and Stan Allen (Community Service Administration, San Francisco) (*ASAO Newsletter* #34 [Spring 1980]: 1–2).

In 1984, longtime active ASAO member Edwin Cook passed away (*ASAO Newsletter* #54 [Spring 1985]: 4). Around that time, issues of the *ASAO Newsletter* were peppered with notices about memorial funds being established in various places in the names of deceased members. In 1988, the report from a working session organized by Phil DeVita titled “The Humble Anthropologist: Essays from the Field” announced plans to publish, saying, “All profits from a published volume will be donated to an Ed Cook Memorial Fund to assist in supporting indigenous Oceanic scholars so they may be able to attend our association’s annual meetings”

(*ASAO Newsletter* #66 [spring 1988]: 12). Three years later, DeVita announced that “the Edwin A. Cook Memorial Fund has money to partially support the travel of scholars and students residing in Oceania to attend the 1992 annual meeting of ASAO. These funds, derived from sales of *The Humbled Anthropologist*, have been generously donated by all contributors to the volume. The maximum award to any individual is \$200, depending upon the number of applicants” (*ASAO Newsletter* #80 [December 1991]: 13).

Interest in incorporating Pacific Islander participants was slowly but gradually coming to the fore. At the 1988 meeting, Annual Meetings [Site] Coordinator Suzy Pflanz-Cook proposed “a site in Hawaii because of the importance of appealing to Pacific Islanders,” and the ASAO Board unanimously approved the idea (1988 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 2); the 1990 meeting was held in Lihue, Kaua‘i. After the 1992 meeting, Juliana Flinn and Leslie Marshall, organizers of the “Fieldwork and Families” session, were the first to issue an explicit invitation in their call for papers in the *Newsletter*: “We encourage contributions from fieldworkers (with and without families who accompanied them to the field), partners, children, other family members, and Pacific Islanders from host communities, for the planned Working Session on this topic at the 1993 meeting in [Kona,] Hawai‘i” (*ASAO Newsletter* #81 [April 1992]: 14; emphasis added).

Establishment of the Pacific Islands Scholars Fund

At the 1992 annual meeting, inspired in part by DeVita’s initiative with the Ed Cook Memorial Fund, the ASAO Board discussed the creation of a “Pacific Islanders Travel Fund” to which ASAO authors could direct publication royalties and others could also make contributions, sometimes in memory of deceased colleagues. At this time the association was in the process of

again applying for tax-exempt status as a “charitable organization” in the United States, meaning that once that status was obtained in 1993, donations by US citizens were tax deductible (1992 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 8). These motivations—memorializing departed friends, getting a tax deduction—supported the main objective, that of encouraging and facilitating Pacific Islander attendance at ASAO meetings.

The new fund was officially created at the 1993 annual meeting. The motion by David Counts, seconded by Karen Nero, and passed unanimously by the ASAO Board, read:

ASAO will establish a memorial fund in honor of deceased active members of the association, to be sustained by a subsidy from the annual dues, individual contributions, and royalties from Humbled Anthropologist contributors and other such contributors as may be designated in the future. A memorial fund committee will be established to devise guidelines for dispersal of funds, review applications, and allocate grants. Members of this committee will consist of a Memorial Fund Chair appointed by the Board, a member of the Board, and a member from the association appointed by the Board. This committee will stand for three years, and the Board will then evaluate the process. (1993 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 5)

At the same 1993 meeting, the board decided to allocate \$4 from every \$20 membership dues payment to this fund, initially for two years. Up to this time, this same portion of ASAO dues had been designated to go to the Monograph Series fund, but it was determined that the series was healthy enough to go on without this support (*ASAO Newsletter* #86 [September 1993]: 2). This dues allocation to PISF was later made permanent and eventually increased, to \$8/member starting in 2005, and to \$10/member beginning in 2014.

The following table summarizes ASAO member contributions to PISF through dues allocation and direct donations for the first twelve years of the program, from 1994 through 2005, as recorded in ASAO’s annual financial reports:

Year	Donations	Dues Allocations	Total Member Contributions
1994	\$180	\$1,152	\$1,332
1995	\$885	\$672	\$1,557
1996	\$1,450	\$936	\$2,386
1997	\$2,424	\$1,296	\$3,720
1998	\$1,875	\$1,304	\$3,179
1999	\$2,173	\$1,432	\$3,605
2000	\$2,524	\$1,364	\$3,888
2001	\$8,310	\$1,320	\$9,630
2002	\$3,206	\$1,316	\$4,522
2003	\$3,809	\$1,400	\$5,209
2004	\$3,789	\$1,336	\$5,125
2005	\$1,921	\$2,736	\$4,657
total	\$32,546	\$16,264	\$48,810

A few of the annual ASAO Treasurer reports submitted after 2005 do not specify the amount of the dues allocation to PISF, making it difficult to extend the above table. However, from 2006 through 2017, the annual total of individual donations reported by the ASAO Treasurer ranged from \$2,910 to \$10,353 and averaged \$5,080/year for those twelve years, compared to an annual average of \$2,712 for the first twelve years. Included were some very large donations from a few members as well as royalties from publications.

In addition to the funds contributed by ASAO members, the ASAO Board in 1995 decided to give an added boost to the Pacific Islands Scholars Fund:

In light of ASAO’s healthy assets, our commitment to ensuring participation by Pacific Island scholars, and the upcoming 25th anniversary meeting, the Board passed a motion to transfer \$5,000 to the PISF next year [1996], with additional funds to be made available on an as-needed basis. We would initially target participants who are chairing or joining working sessions. (1995 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 3)

The Board allocated another \$5,000 from the ASAO general fund in 2005.

In 1993, “as another mechanism for raising money” for the fund, the Board also “discussed selling T-shirts each year (with the location, site, and logo)” (1993 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 6). Although these T-shirts didn’t happen, the idea conveys a sense of the

enthusiasm that was building for the establishment of the fund. Other, successful fundraising efforts during annual meetings included a “white wallaby” sale (1995) and a silent auction (2015).

In 1994, the first award was made from what was now called “The Pacific Island Scholar’s Fund: An ASAO Memorial” to support Joakim “Jojo” Peter’s travel from Guam to attend and participate in the meeting (*ASAO Newsletter* #84 [April 1994]: 2). The minutes for that meeting noted that Peter was “the only Pacific Islander on the program” (ie, participating in a session) and that, “in the future, it is hoped that more than one indigenous island scholar will be funded”; the minutes further explained the application process: “Selection criteria will be letters of support from the candidate, referee(s), and the session organizer; participation in a session; and equitable distribution within Oceania (over time)” (1994 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 5). At that meeting, Vilsoni Hereniko was also welcomed as a new Board member—“the first Pacific Islander to serve on the ASAO Board” (1994 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 1). Bob Franco was appointed coordinator of the new fund.³

From this time on, information about the Pacific Islands Scholars Fund (PISF), as it came to be known, became a regular feature of most *ASAO Newsletters*, reminding members of its purpose, how to donate, application guidelines, and the main criteria for travel awards, which were originally stated in this way:

Each year, the funding committee will base their decisions on three considerations:

- 1) The potential contribution of the scholar to a working session or symposium.
- 2) The importance of session/symposium participation to the scholar’s professional development.
- 3) Individuals who have not received funding will be given priority over those having previously received ASAO Scholars Fund support. (*ASAO Newsletter* #88 [April 1994]: 2)

Additional Forms of Support

At the 1992 meeting, the board also approved inviting Pacific Islander participants to apply for and receive waivers of the meeting registration fees (1992 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 7). Initially called PISF “mini-grants,” these were originally intended to encourage the participation of Pacific Islanders who lived in relatively close proximity to meeting sites and thus did not need airfare but could benefit from registration fee waivers. The waivers were gradually used by any Pacific Islanders who wanted to apply for them, simply requiring a letter from their session organizer confirming their participation. (In 2016, the label for this category of support was changed to “Registration Fee Waivers” in order to relieve the PISF committee from the burden of having to keep track of these in addition to the travel grants.)

The timing of ASAO annual meetings was also adjusted. ASAO annual meetings used to be held between mid-February and mid-March, but from 1994 on, they’ve been scheduled for February in order to better accommodate Pacific Islands and Southern Hemisphere academic calendars (people there are on their long summer break until the end of February). This does, however, pose some difficulties for Northern Hemisphere people, whose terms often start in mid-January. Wintry weather has also contributed to problems, particularly at East Coast meetings, with the most notable example being the 2010 meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, buffeted by two blizzards.

In the early years of ASAO, it was common for hotels to offer complimentary guest rooms when a group filled a certain number of paid rooms. So in 1992 the board decided to give priority for these rooms first to Pacific Islanders traveling on their own funds, and second, to the distinguished lecturer or Board members (1992 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 3). (Board members met for an extra day and thus incurred an extra night’s hotel costs.) In addition, since

hotels often charged the same amount for single and double rooms, individual ASAO members began volunteering to share double rooms with Islander participants at no cost to the latter. Starting in 2006, ASAO's general fund has been drawn on to offer Pacific Islander travel grant recipients small supplementary stipends (usually \$200) toward the costs of food, accommodations, or both.

At the same time, ASAO Board members were aware that real engagement required going beyond financial support to explaining ASAO procedures to new members, including Islander participants, and encouraging new sessions as they developed. Board Chair Lin Poyer noted, "In addition, we need to direct our outreach methods to diverse participants: Pacific Island scholars, professors, graduate students, and activists. More vigorous and systematic efforts are needed to elicit applications from Pacific Island scholars. Vili Hereniko volunteered to work with Bob Franco on this" (1995 ASAO Board meeting minutes: 3).

Session reports in the *Newsletters* following the 1995 meeting reflected the growing attention to Islander participation, for example:

"The Ethnography of Ethnography," organized by Sjoerd Jaarsma and Marta Rohatynskyj: "We thank the Pacific Scholars Fund Committee, especially Bob Franco, for making Shane Solomon's participation possible." (*ASAO Newsletter* #91 [April 1995]: 8)

"Constructing and Imagining Images of Women in Contemporary Pacific Culture(s)," organized by Pamela Rosi and Teresia Teaiwa: "Five people at the session agreed to contribute papers, and Teresia has just recruited five Pacific Islanders to join us in Hawai'i." (*ASAO Newsletter* #91 [April 1995]: 11)

"Multiple Media: From Oral Histories to Video," organized by Karen Nero and Rufino Mauricio: "We welcome new participants to join our discussion, in particular Pacific Islanders who make and use videos. ... We will do all possible to obtain funding for Pacific Islander participants." (*ASAO Newsletter* #91 [April 1995], 13) The announcement of the session, renamed "Ethnography of Pacific Islander-made Videos" in the next issue, stated, "Vili Hereniko will be our discussant. We welcome new participants who will join our discussion, in

particular Pacific Islanders who make and use videos.” (*ASAO Newsletter* #92 [September 1995]: 11)

“Community Creation in Urban Settings,” organized by Judith Modell: “If possible, Pacific Islanders will participate in the session. (ASAO NL 91 [April 1995], 11) A session notice in the next issue reminded people of this invitation: “I have not received responses from Pacific Islanders and would encourage such response—or information about possible participants.” (*ASAO Newsletter* #92 [September 1995]: 10)

Increasing Numbers and Involvement

Nine scholars received PISF monies to attend the 1996 annual meeting in Kona, Hawai‘i; three for the 1997 meeting in San Diego, California, but only one recipient for the 1998 meeting in Pensacola, Florida. Her solo status prompted a thoughtful critique from 1998 awardee, Kēhaulani Kauanui, at the closing plenary, and her subsequent written comments, invited by the ASAO Board, were extensively quoted in the PISF report in the next *Newsletter* (see appendix 2). Besides stressing the importance of mentorship, Kauanui recommended having at each meeting “a comprehensive welcome and education forum about ASAO, including a bit of critical history, an explanation of the usual three-year process, and the hopes and dreams we have for building a long history of exciting stuff!”

ASAO Chair Michèle Dominy wrote in her “From the Chair” piece in the same issue of the *Newsletter*: “I would like especially to draw your attention to Kehaulani Kauanui’s remarks to the closing plenary, reprinted below in the PISF Report; she urges our active mentorship of Pacific Island scholars by drawing them into the professional opportunities ASAO can provide—through identifying how their interests might coincide with sessions underway or in the planning stages, as well as in directing these scholars’ attention to the Pacific Islander Scholars Fund. Please take your lead from Kehaulani’s comments as we plan for future meetings” (*ASAO Newsletter* #100 [April 1998]: 3).

ASAO Board members and officers took Kauanui's comments to heart regarding the need for mentoring and for personal efforts to encourage and explain how ASAO works. PISF recipients (and other newcomers) were introduced or, in some cases, invited to introduce themselves, at the opening plenary, including information about their particular interests; at the welcome party that followed, other members could locate the PISF recipients and newcomers and start getting acquainted. There had at one time been a meal offered for Board members and officers as a partial compensation for the extra travel cost they incur for coming a day early to the meeting; PISF recipients (and Honorary Fellows, as well as the Distinguished Lecturer) were invited to this. The idea was that sharing a meal would give the PISF recipients a chance to get better acquainted with several highly involved ASAO members and to start to connect with others having like interests. In 2012, a "Newcomers Luncheon" was instituted (and it eventually superseded the board and officers luncheon); a wide-open invitation was issued to any newcomers, including PISF travel and mini-grant recipients (although not knowing numbers ahead of time posed logistical and cost complications). Again, the main idea was to provide a warm welcome and an opportunity to both get acquainted with other newcomers and talk with experienced ASAO members about ASAO practices and possibilities.

Furthermore, in 2000 the objectives of PISF were expanded to explicitly encourage involvement of Pacific Islanders in leadership roles of the association. As stated in *ASAO Newsletter #106* (April 2000) and every year thereafter through 2006, and since then on the ASAO website,⁴ the objectives read as follows:

- 1) To incorporate greater Pacific Islander perspective and voice in ASAO meetings, primarily in working sessions and symposia.
- 2) To support and advance the professional development of junior Pacific Islander scholars.

3) To increase Pacific Islander membership in the Association.

4) To increase Pacific Islander contributions and leadership in the Association.

Since 1998, there was never again an ASAO annual meeting with only 1 PISF travel grantee; the average number of travel grants for meetings from 1999 through 2015 was 5, with the highest numbers in two Hawai‘i meetings: Waikiki 2005 had 11 travel grant recipients and Kona 2014 had 10 (see the summary table in appendix 3). The importance of having a “critical mass” of Pacific Islander participants at a given meeting was highlighted in the written responses of several of the 2014 meeting travel grant recipients, 8 of whom combined and sent their personal letters of thanks to the PISF committee and ASAO (published in *ASAO Newsletter* #148 [April 2014]: 5–6). As one recipient put it, “I was so glad to meet and familiarise myself with those Western and indigenous scholars whose work I admire and use as a reference. It was also pleasing to see so many Pacific based scholars attend the conference and may this continue.” Other letters, such as the following three examples, stressed the value of the support and collaboration they found at the meeting:

It is kind of ASAO to facilitate, invite and subsidise for the attendance and participation of PI scholars and I am fortunate to have been part of the ASAO 2014. ... The collaborative nature of the session(s) makes ASAO unique thus reflecting the Oceanian spirit of reciprocity albeit in a scholarly environment.

I never dreamed of meeting the people whose scholarship has informed my own thoughts and intellectual pursuit of knowledge and I would like to sincerely thank ASAO and the PISF committee for your kindness. The possibility of a symposium, peer review process and publication are every Post-Graduate student’s dream and I wish to thank the [session] organizers and participants for their commitment as it enables someone like me to have hope through the overwhelming process of pursuing a PhD.

I have found the ASAO meeting to be a very important space in which to connect and network with colleagues whom I have found to be incredibly supportive, nurturing and encouraging of my career as a Pacific Islander scholar—and vital to my professional progression. I congratulate ASAO for having the courage and compassion to aid Pacific Islanders in this way (indeed, it is a very “Pacific” thing

to do), and it is my genuine hope that the PISF scheme will continue well into the future.

The committee charged with guiding the Pacific Islands Scholars awards program includes an officer (coordinator) appointed by the ASAO Board, a Board representative, and one or two at-large members. Since 2018, at least one member of this committee is a Pacific Islander scholar if not also a prior award recipient.⁵ In 2017–2018, the PISF (now PISA) committee created and implemented a survey for all past awardees for whom contact information was available. Survey results are still being analyzed as to suggestions for improving the program, but most of the respondents felt that the experience has had a positive impact on their scholarship and professional development. The committee regularly reviews and updates communications about the program, application procedures, the handling of payments, and processes for recognizing award recipients. They also regularly remind ASAO members to support the program through their donations, which are essential to the continuation of the awards program.

Notes

1. There are generally three types of ASAO sessions: informal sessions, working sessions, or formal symposia. For details, please see <https://www.asao.org/organizer-guidelines.html>; see also the article on ASAO Sessions by Alexander Mawyer and Alan Howard.

2. In preparing this article, I searched the *ASAE/ASAO Newsletters* (1967–2015) and the ASAO Board and Plenary Meeting Minutes (1979–2015) for mentions of Pacific Islander participation in meetings. The *Newsletters* are particularly convenient sources, as they include reports from ASAO Board chairs, other officers, and session organizers as well as from the coordinators of the Pacific Islands Scholars Fund (PISF) since its establishment in 1993; all issues are available on the ASAO website at <https://www.asao.org/asao-newsletters.html>. ASAO meeting minutes are available in the ASAO archives. For more information about or to request access to archived materials, contact the ASAO Archivist at asaoarchivist@gmail.com.

3. The first ASAO meeting in Hawai‘i was held in Moloka‘i in 1984. Hawai‘i meetings have continued to draw higher numbers of attendees than other meeting sites, and except for Auckland and Canberra, they have drawn more residents of other Pacific Islands. See appendix 1 for a geographical analysis of ASAO meeting attendance 1997–2014 (but note that because many

Islanders live outside the Island Pacific, “Pacific Island residents” should not be equated with “Pacific Islanders”).

4. See the ASAO website: <https://www.asao.org/support-pisa.html>

5. Bob Franco served in the role of PISF Coordinator (an ASAO officer position) from 1993 until 1999, when Paul Shankman succeeded him, remaining in the position through 2004. Keith Chambers was appointed coordinator from 2005 until 2010, followed by Judith Schachter, who served until 2014. Since 1996, the PISF Coordinator has worked with a committee of other ASAO members, including representatives of the ASAO Board and the membership at large. The ASAO Treasurer and Membership Coordinator were added to the committee as ex-officio members starting in 2014. ASAO Board members Susanne Kuehling, Maria Lepowsky, Carlos Mondragon, Tate LeFevre, and Kirsten McGavin chaired or co-chaired the PISF Committee between 2013 and 2017, when Chelsea Wentworth was appointed PISF Coordinator, remaining in that role until 2022.

Appendix 1.

The following report was originally published in ASAO Newsletter #136 (April 2010): 23–26; figures were updated in July 2014 in response to a request for information from the ASAO Board, to whom Alan Howard provided this version of the report.

ASAO Meetings and Memberships, 1997–2010: A Special Report

Updated 23 July 2014 [new information is in italics]

A survey regarding meeting site selection has just been carried out by ASAO Chair, Joshua Bell. The survey invitation was sent to everyone who had (a) been an ASAO member at any point from 2005–2010 and (b) attended at least one ASAO meeting during the same period. The announcement of the survey was quickly noted on ASAO.net and led to an extended and lively e-discussion, in the course of which it became apparent that some statistical information might help to dispel misconceptions about ASAO membership and meetings. The statistics reported here are drawn from previous reports and the ASAO membership database.

From its beginnings in 1967 (as the Association for Social Anthropology in Eastern Oceania), most ASAO meetings have taken place in the continental United States. Regular annual meetings commenced in 1972 and since that time *thirty-one* meetings have been held in the continental US and *eight* in Hawai‘i (1984, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2005, *2011, and 2014*). Three meetings (1991, 2000, and 2003) have been hosted in Canada, all in British Columbia. Two meetings (2002 and 2008) have taken place in New Zealand and Australia.

In the 1970s and 1980s, meeting site selection did not follow any particular pattern, but about half of the meetings took place in the western US, interspersed with meetings in the Northeast, South, and Midwest. Since 1990 the meeting sites have been on a regular three-year cycle between Hawai‘i and the East and West Coast regions of North America. In 2002, with the meeting in Auckland, this cycle was amended to include a “Pacific” venue alternating with Hawai‘i. The current pattern is: East Coast, Hawai‘i, West Coast, East Coast, Pacific, West Coast. For a complete list of ASAO meeting locations and dates, please see http://www.asao.org/pacific/meetings72_03.htm. [*now <http://www.asao.org/past-locations.html>*]

ASAO Annual Meetings: 1997–2014							
			Meeting registrants by place of RESIDENCE				
Year	REGION: Place (where meeting held)	Total	USA & Canada	Australia & New Zealand	Europe	Pacific Islands	Other*
1998	EAST COAST: Pensacola FL	100	88	1	9	2	0
2001	EAST COAST: Miami FL	127	93	9	18	7	0
2004	EAST COAST: Salem MA	134	114	4	12	4	0
2007	EAST COAST: Charlottesville VA	113	83	6	20	3	1
<i>2010</i>	<i>EAST COAST: Alexandria VA</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>2013</i>	<i>EAST COAST: San Antonio TX</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>7 (3)</i>
<i>East Coast: Average attendance</i>		<i>109</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>

1999	HAWAI'I: Hilo	168	120	20	11	15	2
2005	HAWAI'I: Lihue	224	150	33	25	12	4
2011	<i>HAWAI'I: Waikiki</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>0</i>
2014	<i>HAWAI'I: Kona</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>11 (15)</i>
<i>Hawai'i: Average attendance</i>		<i>175</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>6 (4)</i>
2002	PACIFIC: Auckland	149	53	66	10	19	1
2008	PACIFIC: Canberra	178	54	83	25	11	5
<i>Pacific: Average attendance</i>		<i>164</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>3</i>
1997	WEST COAST: San Diego CA	145	125	10	6	3	1
2000	WEST COAST: Vancouver BC	133	97	14	13	7	2
2003	WEST COAST: Vancouver BC	179	141	10	19	8	1
2006	WEST COAST: San Diego CA	154	108	15	24	3	4
2009	WEST COAST: Santa Cruz CA	137	95	13	18	6	5
2012	<i>WEST COAST: Portland OR</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4 (7)</i>
<i>West Coast: Average attendance</i>		<i>145</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3 (1)</i>
<i>Average attendance, 1997-2014</i>		<i>142</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3 (2)</i>

**Numbers in parentheses in the “other” column indicate meeting registrants whose geographical location could not be determined from ASAO membership records. They are not included in totals.*

As of 23 July 2014, 75% of ASAO members reside in the Northern Hemisphere, with 60% in the US and Canada. Residence patterns of annual meeting attendees are similar, with an average over the past 17 years of 80% of meeting registrants residing in the Northern Hemisphere, and 67% in the US and Canada. But to encourage greater participation on the part of people from the Pacific Islands, Australia, and New Zealand, whose academic year begins in late February, since 1992 all ASAO meetings have taken place in February.

The meetings have not been held during June, July, and August, which is the summer break for the majority of members and a time when many try to do fieldwork. ASAO meetings are also scheduled to avoid calendar conflicts with other academic conferences of importance for our members (the American Anthropological Association, Pacific History Association, European Society for Oceanists, etc.).

The size of ASAO meetings over the years 1997–2014 has ranged from a high of 224 (2005, Hawaii) to a low of 100 (1998, Florida), with an average of *141 registered* participants. Meetings on the East Coast tend to be the smallest and meetings in Hawai'i tend to be the largest. The meetings held in New Zealand (2002) and Australia (2008) drew higher-than-average numbers of participants residing in those countries, but few of these participants have come to subsequent meetings or become members of the organization. The meetings also had much lower-than-average turnout of participants from North America, where, as noted above, the majority of the members reside.

ASAO Membership: 1996–2014							
Year	Region (where meeting held)	Total	Members by place of RESIDENCE				
			USA & Canada	Australia & New Zealand	Europe	Pacific Islands	Other
1998	East Coast	341	258	25	36	19	3
2001	East Coast	345	259	24	39	19	4
2004	East Coast	354	262	30	39	17	6
2007	East Coast	293	210	25	42	13	3
2010	<i>East Coast</i>	290	197	33	38	18	4
2013	<i>East Coast</i>	399	245	60	60	18	16
<i>Avg # of members, East Coast mtg years</i>		337	239	33	42	17	6
1996	Hawai‘i	358	273	33	31	16	5
1999	Hawai‘i	373	273	30	40	26	4
2005	Hawai‘i	393	275	44	41	25	8
2011	<i>Hawai‘i</i>	198	126	23	32	17	7
2014	<i>Hawai‘i</i>	417	252	62	60	24	21
<i>Avg # of members, Hawai‘i mtg years</i>		348	240	38	41	22	10
2002	Pacific	364	245	45	38	29	5
2008	Pacific	327	215	50	40	15	7
<i>Avg # of members, Pacific mtg years</i>		346	230	48	39	22	6
1997	West Coast	338	254	27	33	19	5
2000	West Coast	339	253	29	31	22	4
2003	West Coast	376	269	38	44	19	6
2006	West Coast	340	245	33	42	15	5
2009	West Coast	291	201	31	35	11	11
2012	<i>West Coast</i>	428	263	65	63	20	17
<i>Avg # of members, West Coast mtg years</i>		352	248	37	41	18	8
<i>Average # of members, 1996–2014</i>		345	241	37	41	19	7

Please note: Individual renewal notices were not sent in 2010–2011, which affected membership numbers. Figures for 2012–2014 in this table were derived retrospectively from ASAO membership database in order to determine geographic locations of members, but the totals do not match the numbers in the Membership Coordinators’ official reports for those years, which were submitted earlier in the year (February 2012: 185; May 2012: 314; February 2013: 341; January 2014: 355).

Ethnicity and nationality are not tracked in ASAO statistics, which are instead based on country of residence, but meeting participation and membership of Pacific Islanders (including persons of Pacific Islander ancestry residing in the US, Australia, etc.) has been an issue of ongoing concern within the organization. In 1998, J. Kehaulani Kauanui, herself a Pacific Islander, remarked on the topic:

“the general issue of under-representation is connected to larger issues...[having to do with a general need for] mentoring, educating young scholars about the complicated processes of professionalization, about presenting work at academic meetings, and helping them to understand why these association conversations are important ways to learn about the discipline as well as the region, and to get familiar with ways in which academics network with each other, with an eye to the future and an eye to meaningful dialogue...[possibly in the context of] long-term projects, and collaborative intellectual efforts. This is a tall order, yes, but it also seems critical in the ways in which one might see how these various suggestions could potentially enrich our meetings, and Pacific scholarship—that it has potential for epistemological diversity—not just a different looking ‘face’ as it were.” (J. Kehaulani Kauanui, as quoted in the *ASAO Newsletter*, issue 100 (April 1998), p. 4-5).

ASAO continues to encourage Pacific Islander scholars’ participation in the annual meetings. Financial barriers to participation are mitigated through the Pacific Island Scholars Fund (PISF). A program for Travel Grants, awarded annually on a competitive basis, has been in place since 1994; 101 grants have been awarded to date. In addition to support for airfare costs, the grants provide for waivers of meeting registration fees and membership dues. Whenever possible, arrangements have also been made for assistance with lodging. Another category of support, Mini-grants, was instituted in 1999. Mini-grants cover meeting fees and one-year membership dues to Pacific Islander scholars who are presenting papers or organizing sessions. To date, 99 mini-grants have been provided. Funding for PISF comes primarily from allocation of a portion of each member’s dues and voluntary donations.

Pacific Island Scholars Fund: Travel Grants and Mini-grants, 1994-2014				
Year	Region (where mtg held)	Travel Grants	Mini- grants	Notes
1994	West Coast	1		
1995	East Coast	1		
1996	Hawai‘i	9		
1997	West Coast	3		
1998	East Coast	1		
1999	Hawai‘i	5	3	first year mini-grants offered
2000	West Coast	2	2	3 travel grants offered, 2 accepted
2001	East Coast	2	3	5 mini-grants offered, 3 accepted
2002	Pacific	7	11	10 travel grants offered; 13 mini-grants offered
2003	West Coast	4	8	6 travel grants offered; 13 mini-grants offered
2004	East Coast	3	7	6 travel grants offered; 18 mini-grants offered
2005	Hawai‘i	6	27	7 travel grants offered
2006	West Coast	6	11	9 travel grants offered
2007	East Coast	7	4	
2008	Pacific	5	2	
2009	West Coast	3	8	
2010	East Coast	6	1	9 travel grants offered, 6 accepted, <i>but only 3 attended due to blizzards</i>

2011	<i>Hawai'i</i>	11	9	14 travel grants offered, 11 accepted
2012	<i>West Coast</i>	4	3	7 travel grants offered, 4 accepted
2013	<i>East Coast</i>	3	??	8 travel grants offered (5 full and 3 partial), 3 accepted
2014	<i>Hawai'i</i>	10	2?	11 travel grants offered, 10 accepted
	<i>Total</i>	101	99	

--Kathryn Creely (ASAO Membership Coordinator, 2007–2009; Treasurer, 2005–2006); and Jan Rensel (ASAO Secretary/Treasurer, 1996–2004). *Updated by Alan Howard (ASAO Membership Coordinator, 2012–2017), Jan Rensel (ASAO Archivist, 2006–present), and Mary McCutcheon (ASAO Treasurer, 2008–2017)*

Appendix 2.

V. PACIFIC ISLANDS SCHOLARS FUND REPORT

(*ASAO Newsletter* #100 [April 1998]: 4–5)

This year the Pacific Islands Scholars Fund had one application submitted by the November 1, 1997 deadline. (One application came in late and was not funded.) For the February 1998 meeting we funded Ms. Kehaulani Kauanui from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She participated in the Symposium “Re/Configuring Memory: Generating History and Memorializing Identity in the Pacific,” and organized an Informal Session, “Diasporic Politics and Pacific Islander Communities in the Continental United States.” Funds expended totaled \$579.

At the closing plenary Kehaulani offered her reflections on the small presence of Pacific Islander scholars at the meeting and among the membership generally. She followed this up with written comments to the Board and Newsletter Editor, sent at their request. “I think there is a persistent problem with under-representation of Pacific Islanders in ASAO,” Kehaulani wrote. “Some folks may not see this as an issue or might read my articulation of it as essentialist. But I am interested in knowing if other people noticed this and whether or not they consider it problematic.

“There could be many reasons for this under-representation, among them: feelings of tokenism, isolation, and having to bear the burden of representation.” But, Kehaulani went on, “I think the general issue of under-representation is connected to larger issues” having to do with a general need for “mentoring, educating young scholars about the complicated processes of professionalization, about presenting work at academic meetings, and helping them to understand why these association conversations are important ways to learn about the discipline as well as the region, and to get familiar with ways in which academics network with each other, with an eye to the future and an eye to meaningful dialogue,” possibly in the context of “long-term projects, and collaborative intellectual efforts.

“This is a tall order, yes, but it also seems critical in the ways in which one might see how these various suggestions could potentially enrich our meetings, and Pacific scholarship—that it has potential for epistemological diversity—not just a different looking ‘face’ as it were. As far as I know, Amy Stillman and I were the only two PI-identified academics at the Pensacola meeting.

And even while these were the best meetings of ASAO I've attended so far—as intellectual debate is concerned—it was still an isolating experience.”

Although she is grateful for the financial support she received through PISF, Kehaulani reminded ASAO members that “the PI scholars’ fund is just one of many tactics that could be employed—most have to do with paying more attention to making personal efforts to convey some encouragement to the PI scholars that current members might be in touch with”—whether or not those scholars are at the members’ own institutions or elsewhere.

Expressing her great appreciation for Karen Nero’s helpful efforts over the years in encouraging Pacific Islander participation in ASAO, Kehaulani also noted the importance of such support from Teresia Teaiwa (an earlier PISF awardee); Jeannette Mageo, who organized one of the sessions Kehaulani participated in; and other individuals who made her feel welcome in ASAO and at the meetings. “I reckon that if ten senior scholars made commitments similar to what you have done, and along the lines of efforts Karen Nero has made over the past few years—there would be a consistent and ongoing shift in the kinds of meetings we have.”

Kehaulani stressed that Pacific Islanders aren’t always aware of the processes involved in participating in ASAO sessions, especially with regard to the three-stage development of Informal and Working Sessions followed by Symposia. One solution to this might be to offer at each meeting “a comprehensive welcome and education forum about ASAO, including a bit of critical history, an explanation of the usual three-year process, and the hopes and dreams we have for building a long history of exciting stuff!”

The success of the PISF program depends on all of us:

- your continuing generosity in the form of donations. Warm thanks to all of you who included contributions with your annual dues or conference registration. We especially want to thank those who signed over their royalties checks to ASAO for the PISF—a very appropriate way of “giving back” to the Pacific community. REMEMBER: ASAO is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and in the US, your contributions are tax-deductible.
- the assistance of committee members Jill Nash and Karen Nero.
- the involvement of session organizers in encouraging and supporting Pacific Islands scholars’ participation and applications, in keeping with the procedures outlined below. As next year’s meeting will take place in Hawai‘i, we hope for a sizable contingent of applicants and urge the early identification and encouragement of suitable candidates for funds.

1998–99 Selection Guidelines

The committee selects individuals based on the following criteria/emphases:

- 1) We place priority on participation in Working Sessions; next in Symposia.
- 2) We prefer to fund younger scholars and graduate students who may have difficulty accessing institutional funds. We would like to develop a separate fund (US\$1,500 annually) that would be

used to invite a senior Pacific Island scholar to contribute at the Symposium level as a discussant. We would appreciate ASAO members' suggestions about possible sources of funds for the Senior Scholars Fund, as well as for PISF.

3) We try to achieve equal representation from throughout Oceania.

SESSION ORGANIZERS PLEASE NOTE: The role of the session organizer is paramount. From application submission to the scholar's arrival at the meeting site, the session organizer plays the central role in communication between the committee and the scholar. This is particularly the case when the scholar cannot be reached by email. We do not want to introduce a technological bias into the selection process, so session organizers may need to fax and phone those places not yet on email, thereby ensuring timely communication. As we get closer to the meeting date, session organizers should work with the Program Coordinator (Larry Carucci) to arrange cost-effective ground transportation and especially accommodations for the scholar.

The Application Process

We've tried to keep the application process as simple as possible. The committee, with the above criteria in mind, base their decision on the quality of:

- 1) The letter from the session organizer addressing the potential contributions of the scholar to the session.
- 2) The letter from the scholar addressing her/his contribution to the session, and how the session fits into his/her professional development.
- 3) The letter from a colleague of the scholar. For scholars who are graduate students, this letter should be from their principle advisor. This letter should also address the scholar's potential contribution to the session and professional development.

Appendix 3.

IV. PACIFIC ISLANDS SCHOLARS FUND (*ASAO Newsletter* #152 [September 2015]: 3–4)

The Pacific Islands Scholars Fund (PISF) would like to remind everyone of the procedures to apply for a PISF travel grant. The final deadline for this round of applications is **October 1, 2015**. Please see <http://asao.org/pacific/pisf.htm> for all the details and forms.

For a complete application, you need:

- Application form (from the website)
- Application letter, explaining who you are and what you are planning to contribute to which session, if you have received PISF funding before
- Abstract of your paper
- 2 Letters of reference: your session organizer needs to write one of them, the other should be from a senior or advanced scholar who knows your work well and can comment on it
- Quote for the costs of your airfare

Depending on our funds, we give priority to participants in Working Sessions, next to Symposia, and if we can afford it, to Informal Sessions.

Please note: The current deadline for applications for the 2016 San Diego Meeting is October 1. Candidates will be notified by November 15, and awards must be accepted by December 15.

Mary McCutcheon has produced an itemized list of annual total disbursements in relation to the number of annual PISF Travel Grants that have been awarded since 1994. Based on this Jan Rensel has added the number of annual Travel Grants awarded to the table presented in the PISF report in the last issue.

Year	Meeting Site	Travel Awards	US Dollar Amount
1994	San Diego CA	1	\$838
1995	Clearwater FL	1	\$1,699
1996	Kona, Hawai‘i	9	\$7,328
1997	San Diego CA	3	\$1,697
1998	Pensacola FL	1	\$579
1999	Hilo, Hawai‘i	5	\$5,630
2000	Vancouver BC	2	\$1,338
2001	Miami FL	2	\$2,707
2002	Auckland NZ	7	\$4,464
2003	Vancouver BC	4	\$7,345
2004	Salem MA	3	\$2,555
2005	Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i	6	\$4,911
2006	San Diego CA	6	\$6,170
2007	Charlottesville VA	7	\$9,819
2008	Canberra, Australia	5	\$5,000
2009	Santa Cruz CA	3	\$4,383
2010	Alexandria VA	6	\$4,050
2011	Waikīkī, Hawai‘i	11	\$9,161
2012	Portland OR	4	\$3,892
2013	San Antonio TX	3	\$4,750
2014	Kona, Hawai‘i	10	\$13,726
2015	Santa Fe, NM	7	\$10,482
total	22 meetings	106	\$112,524

*Original figures from Treasurer’s annual reports compiled by Jan Rensel (for 1994–2004), Kathy Creely (2005–2008), and Mary McCutcheon (2009–2014). Updated figures provided 23 July 2015 by Mary McCutcheon for 2008, 2011, and 2014; annual report for 2015 will be filed in February 2016. (This table includes only travel grants from PISF and does not include housing and food stipends from the ASAO General Fund.)

Carlos Mondragon, PISF Chair